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FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER

IN

RELIGION.

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The PAMPHLET MISSION has been established for the purpose of publishing a fortnightly series of Liberal Religious pamphlets on the Unity, the Evolution, the Doctrines, the Bibles, and the Leaders of Religion; on the Relations of Religion to Science, to Devotion and Conduct, and on kindred topics, written by men whose word combines Liberal thought with religious feeling. Each pamphlet will contain an Essay or Sermon, (original or reprint,) together with from six to ten pages of "Notes and News," made up of short editorials, gleanings from the freshest religious thought, and news-items about Liberal work, Liberal books, etc. It is hoped that the publication will meet the want not only of persons already connected with Liberal organizations, but also, especially, of *isolated Liberals*—the fives and tens and twenties in small towns—men and women thirsty for such words as these pamphlets will carry. Besides their use in the home, they can do good service among friends and neighbors, as well as furnish regular material for Sunday meetings and discussions in places hardly to be reached by Liberal preachers.

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PROPHECY.

BY REV. JOHN SNYDER.

"*Can ye not discern the signs of the times.*"—Math. xvi:3.

I want to present some thoughts upon the subject of Jesus Christ as a prophet and as an interpreter of prophecy. The eye of the careful student of sacred history can detect running through the pages of the Old Testament from the beginning, two distinct and clearly marked streams of religious thought and inspiration. For purposes of classification, they may be called the *priestly* inspiration and the *prophetic* inspiration. In the former we see developed the disposition to make a careful and specific prediction of future events, and the nations and individuals to be concerned in them. We can easily imagine that this disposition largely dominated the religious thought of the Hebrew people. An intense desire to look into, and map out, and forecast the future, is, and has been always, the characteristic phase of the religious thought of *all* nations. It furnishes an ample field for the exercise of that love of the wonderful and the marvelous, which marks a certain stage of intellectual growth; and when not abused, it is a healthful element of human development. It lies at the basis of all Astrology, Soothsaying, Palmistry, Necromancy, Spiritualism, ancient and modern. It has and always has had a strange fascination for some of the rarest minds of history, and has given a dash of what we may call superstition to the reflections and beliefs of men and women distinguished for vigorous sense and coolness of judgment. Conspicuous among such was the first Napoleon, who, we are told, exhibited a strange weakness in

this direction. Now we can readily believe that in this kind of religious thought, the Hebrews were profoundly and passionately interested. Led by the general drift of their sacred literature to anticipate a time of national emancipation and an especial human and ordained deliverer, they concentrated thought, conjecture, study and fancy upon the whole body of prophetic utterances, and constructed in imagination a series of conditions and circumstances by virtue of which and under which this Messianic deliverer was to appear. He was to be born of a certain tribe, in a certain place. He was to be preceded and followed by certain clearly and definitely marked events. As, for illustration, he was to be of the royal line of David, and before he entered upon his mission, was to be preceded by a miraculous appearance of the great prophet Elijah! So that when Jesus presented himself as the fulfilment of the national expectation, we are told that he and his claims were at once subjected to the severest prophetic tests and measured by the prophetic standards. Where was he born; of what family; what were his aspirations, and how did he propose carrying them into effect? And we see on the part of the Gospel writers an honest desire to satisfy these inquiries. They shared the popular convictions themselves, and at every step of Christ's career, they endeavor to show his conformity to the established Messianic model. His birth was an exact fulfilment of prophecy; the manner of his death, the nature and work of the person by whom he was preceded.

Now, on the other hand, the Old Testament is permeated by a more exalted power of inspiration. There are magnificent prophecies of blessing and cursing, prosperity and adversity, which manifestly bear no reference to specific persons or events in the future, but which are the declaration of the great, universal and fundamental laws of righteousness, justice and truth, by virtue of which certain consequences shall fall upon men and nations. If these prophecies do denounce judgments against particular cities, lands or nations, it is because

their people are sowing the wind of wickedness, of which the whirlwind of destruction is the inevitable harvest. And the denunciation of such terrible judgments, being but the proclamation of God's unchanging spiritual laws, are accompanied with declarations, expressed or understood, that the judgments can always be avoided by repentance and reformation. Now, beyond question, Jesus spoke in relation to prophecy and prophetic interpretation, in harmony with this higher range of religious genius and inspiration. Although the writers of the Gospels claim that in him the specific Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled, he makes no such claim for himself In none of his recorded words do we find such a claim put forward and sustained; and in one or two of the most important instances he either rebukes the popular interpretation of a particular prediction, or else gives it a spiritual and comprehensive explanation which destroys all its value as a specific prediction. Now to one or two proofs of this. In Matthew and Luke, we find what purports to be the genealogy of the Master; tracing him back to the royal David, and coupled with the statement of his having been born in Bethlehem of Judea.

Now, whatever claims Jesus Christ may have made upon the spiritual and temporal allegiance of the Hebrew race, they were not founded either upon the place of his birth or the royalty of his descent, if we may trust the record. He comes into that record as a citizen of Nazareth; is known as such through his ministry. When the fact of his connection with that disreputable town is urged as a reason for rejecting his claim—because no prophet cometh out of Nazareth—neither he nor his disciples urge in reply the natural and obvious answer that Bethlehem was his birth-place. He never refers to his connection with the line of David as furnishing the reason of his demand for the people's acceptance of his claim; and on one occasion, by implication, denies that such pedigree would establish a Messianic claim. You are familiar with the circum-

stance referred to; he is speaking of the supposed Messianic prophecy contained in one of the Psalms, and he says: "If David calls him Lord, (meaning the Messiah,) how then is he his son?" The meaning of this obviously being that the popular notion respecting the Davidic descent of the Messiah was erroneous. At no time does Christ measure his claim by the standard of an Old Testament prophecy. When John, from his prison, sends to inquire concerning his Messianic credentials, Christ does not refer to his fulfilment of Old Testament predictions. He does not appeal to musty manuscripts or popular traditional beliefs, but he simply appeals to his simple human work of mercy, charity and truth-teaching as the all-sufficient answer to John's question. And more definitely and affirmatively than all this, is his treatment of a definite prediction of the prophet Malachi, which was, at the time, generally supposed to be Messianic in its character. This prediction contained the announcement that the prophet Elijah would reappear upon the earth previous to the advent of the Messiah. The popular mind was full of this belief. When John came, we are told by the fourth Gospel, he was asked the direct question: "Art thou Elijah?" To this, of course, he gives a negative answer. Now mark how the Master treats this prophecy. He admits that Elijah must come first, but asserts, contrary to the national conviction, that Elijah has already come. He says, in substance, if one is able to receive the truth he may see that Elijah is already come in the person and mission of the Baptist; not, of course, that John was identically the ancient prophet restored to the earth, but simply that any reformer who did the work and accomplished the mission of the elder prophet, spiritually fulfilled the conditions of the prophecy. John is Elijah if he does Elijah's work.

And not only in the interpretation of prophecy, but in the manifestation of the prophetic spirit, Jesus shows his harmony with the grand souls of the older day. He makes no prediction of specific events which are to happen in the distant fu-

ture;—events which are unchangeable in character, and the fulfilment of which are to attest his supernatural knowledge. He even definitely disclaims the possession of any such knowledge; says that while the places of honor in the heavenly kingdom shall be given to those who are worthy, he does not know who shall prove to be worthy; such knowledge is for his Father only.

In Matthew xvi, the record says that the Pharisees and Sadducees ask him to show them a "sign from Heaven." We cannot tell now in what connection the demand is made, but it must have been in relation to some prophecies he was making concerning the coming fate of the Jewish people, else the Master's answer would display little relevancy. He says: "When it is evening, you say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. * * * You know then how to discern the face of the sky, and can you not know the signs of the times?" And this answer is the key-note to Christ's prophetic system. With him, the law of prophecy was part of a fixed spiritual science. In the human soul, in human history, there are certain unalterable laws, just as in the material universe. Every effect has its sufficient cause. Just as certainly as the harvest follows the planting, will certain fixed consequences follow sin and any form of injustice in men or peoples. And once holding in mind the law of the moral universe, it required no supernatural knowledge or faculty to forecast certain results as the neccessary consequence of certain forms of immorality.

To give an illustration that will help to make this thought plain. When Prof. Proctor was in this country, he was amazed at the accuracy and success we had achieved in the study of storms; he said that he studied the weather prognostications from Washington, with great care, and only twice was there anything like a mistake in the predictions made concerning the coming weather. On Monday, the scientist would say that about 10 o'clock Friday night the Massachusett coast would be beaten by a storm of snow and wind; within an

hour, say, of the time predicted the tempest would come. Now, if the meteorologist can interpret the mystic voices of nature, and say that *next day* it will snow or rain, why cannot he predict the weather of next week, or next month, or next year? May not the science me made so perfect that he shall be able to say that the opening-day of our *next* Centennial shall be fair or foul? It is rationally and scientifically conceivable. Now you will observe that no supernatural element enters into the calculations of the scientific man; he knows that nature is unvarying, and that the causes that shall make the rain and sunshine of the next century or the next thousand years to come, are at work this instant.

O. B. FROTHINGHAM speaks of the discovery of a new planet in a manner which illustrates very strikingly the point at issue. He says that thirty years ago, a French astronomer was watching the movements of the planet Uranus. This star had been a standing puzzle to science; it would not preserve a perfect orbit, but was perpetually turning from its course at given points in its track. This man conjectured that out of the range of telescopic vision there must be a disturbing body. He went to his mathematics, and by their help prophesied that on a certain night, in a certain part of the heavens, a new star would appear. At the predicted time,and in the predicted place, a bright star glided into telescopic range. The wonderful prophecy was fulfilled, and yet no miracle was in the man or in his science; it was simple nature. Now, given a spiritual universe, as unalterable in its character, and the laws that determine its causes and effects, are we not justified in believing that such rare and gifted spiritual beings as Jesus, possess a natural power to predict, by the sublime science of the soul, certain events of which the determining and creating causes are all in existence and revealed to the knowing spirit? So that prophecy, both in the material and the moral world, are identical in their subjection to natural law. The prophet of science and the prophet of religion belong to a common brotherhood.

Now we must take into the account a consideration of the utmost importance to the discussion. The student of *outer* nature can safely assume the existence in that realm of an absolute system of order and fixed law. The material acted upon has no distinct and voluntary volition. The stars and tides are the *recipients* of force, not its *generators*. They move as they are moved. But in the spiritual world we have to deal with forces which are *not* a fixed quantity, whose power is not calculable; that is, the forces of the human mind, will, and soul. There may be a law of divine necessity underlying the human will, in violation of which the will *cannot* act, but to all human knowledge the will is free;—free to create action, free to weigh motives and to choose some things and refuse others. The man can cease being vile, and become virtuous; he can cease being a liar, and become veracious. As far as the human mind can see, there is no inexorable and deadening fatalism dominating the will. Of course, without moral independence, virtue and vice are impossible.

So that in the Old Testament there are cases in which, after the denunciation of judgment, by a prophet, against a man or a city; after the revelation of God's will concerning the sin of the individual or nation—there is a change in the predicted result. Upon the grand general law of the soul, that retribution will follow sin inevitably, the prophet makes the denunciation, but reparation, contrition and repentance come in as new spiritual forces, and the result is altered. But according to the prevalent notions of prophecy, there is no place for the operation of that great factor—the human will—in the production of the predicted event. Man is practically a puppet in the hands of an Omnipotent fate. God is represented as saying that such and such things must inevitably occur; that the Persian or the Assyrian Empire, or the Romish Church, must go through certain inevitable phases of experience; that the Antichrist, and the First or Third Napoleon, or Bismarck; that the "scarlet woman" who is sitting upon the hills, must

be the papal power; that the Jews are suffering from a prophetic curse imposed upon them.

Now, I say that this conception of the prophetic spirit, as it is revealed in the scriptures, is degrading and apt to be morally dangerous. It makes the Bible a Delphic oracle; prophecy deteriorates into forture-telling; for it is no more dignified and fitting to search the pages of David or Revelation, to find out the fate of an individual man, or church, or race, than it is to peep into the unrevealed future by means of the tripod and the tipping-table. Of one thing, I believe, we may be certain: God has given us the knowledge of the primal laws of the soul and conscience. We know the fixed consequences of vice and injustice. The Bible is the magnificent chart upon which the course of the human soul is marked. History is full of the shipwreck of men and nations who have wilfully wandered from this plain path upon the mysterious ocean of life. But I do not believe that the Infinite Father has revealed in any book or in any soul, the specific fate which, in the distant future, will befall any man or race or church. I believe that such a revelation will paralyze the human will, and take from man that dignified moral independence by which he is, under the Infinite, the creator of his own destiny. It would warp human history. What has been the result of the widely-spread conviction in Protestant minds that the Romish Church is the scarlet beast of the Apocalypse, drunk with the blood of the saints? Men have been taught to hate and despise that Church, treat with contempt its claims to Christian recognition, because it is supposed to wear, like Cain, the mark of God's curse on its forehead. What has been the consequence, for 1800 years, of the Christian conviction that God proclaimed by prophecy, the curse upon the Jew? All Christian nations have joined with pious zeal to make the word of God effective. The hatred of man has fulfilled the supposed prediction. And what wonder! Once prove by Daniel, or Isaiah, or St. John, that God is pointing his finger of fiery wrath at a particular

race or man, and that race or man becomes the legitimate object of human hatred and scorn. There is no difficulty in fulfilling such predictions, if you once determine what constitutes fulfillment, and then bend your energies in that direction.

Be assured, friends, the whole system of belief is wrong and unchristian, and unworthy an enlightened faith. This nation and any nation—Jew or Gentile—this church or any church—Catholic or Protestant—will survive or perish, will be accursed or blessed, just as they obey or disregard the laws of righteousness and truth. Every man who sins is Antichrist; every Church that is besotted, bigoted and bitter, is the mystic Babylon; every nation that forgets God and justice in its greed of gold and lust of power, is the great image of Daniel, which falls from its place of power and pride, because its feet are crumbling clay. All this we know, and the rest is hidden from us by the mercy of God. It may be you are going into the destruction of sin; it may be this nation is digging its political grave, by its own corruptions. But, thank God, the future is veiled from us. In the counsel of the Infinite, our fate may be inevitable or fixed, but we shall never be driven to despair by the awful revelation that God has determined our ruin beyond the power of recall.

THOUGHTS FROM CARLYLE.—Alas, my friends, credulous incredulity is a strange matter.——The beginning and the end of what is the matter with us in these days is *that we have forgotten God.*——Show me the man you honor: I know by that symptom better than by any other what kind of a man you yourself are.——The resuscitating of a soul that has gone to Asphyxia, is no momentary or pleasant process, but a long and terrible one.——A right heavy burden is precisely the thing wanted for a young man. Grievous to be borne: but bear it well. You will find it one day to have been verily blessed.

Let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this precept well to heart: "Do the duty which lies nearest to thee," which thou knowest to be a duty; thy second duty will have already become clearer.

Notes and News.

It is suggested that one way in which Sunday School and Church workers may help each other, is by taking pains to send to one another, as far as practicable, copies of any Sunday School sheets, lesson papers, festival programmes, Sunday School concert exercises, missionary tracts, parish or Sunday School devices, etc., which they may at any time prepare.

The historian FROUDE has a very striking—we had almost said startling—article in the May-June *International Review*, on "Science and Theology," in which he gives a most graphic, not to say sensational, picture of the present chaotic condition of theological thought in Christendom, caused, as he claims, by modern inquiry and the discoveries of science.

Rev. A. D. MAYO, speaking of Mr. MOODY, says: "It is teaching like this (MOODY'S coarse handling and absurd interpretation of the Scriptures, and his offensive superstition concerning the Atonement,) that sends good men to the lectures of ROBERT INGERSOLL as a sort of scape-pipe to scream off the indignation they don't care to scream off themselves, at such a caricature of Almighty God."

"Why do we try to hide it from mankind, and even to conceal it from ourselves, that the men who fashioned our creeds, founded our churches, transmitted to us the former customs, and wrote our Bibles, were all men of like passions with ourselves; and that, however superior to us in wisdom and in goodness they may have been, they were still at an infinite remove from omniscience?"—CHAS. G. AMES.

The twenty-fourth session of the Western Unitarian Conference will be held at the Church of the Messiah, Chicago, June 4, 5 and 6. The programme we have given in a preceding number (No. 5.) "All friends of simple, practical Christianity, and unfettered religious thought," are invited to attend. At a recent meeting the Conference passed the following resolution: "*Resolved*, that the Western Unitarian Conference conditions its fellowship by no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all thereto who desire to work with it in advancing the Kingdom of God."

The Roman Catholic Parochial Schools in St. Louis have been disbanded, and the pupils, 15,000 in number, are now attending the pub-

lic schools. Bible reading and morning religious services were dispensed with in the public schools, and doctrinal selections eliminated from the school readers, so that there really seemed to the Catholic religious teachers no reason why the children of that church should be kept longer in separate schools. The Catholic parochial schools were both troublesome and expensive, so they were closed. A similar movement is talked of in Cincinnati.

Rev. J. H. HEYWOOD writes of Rev. Mr. DOUTHIT'S work at Shelbyville, Ills., as follows: "In its fervor, it reminds one of the work of WESLEY, and its spirit is that which has made the ministry-at-large in Boston so winning and successful. If any brother has come to doubt whether Unitarianism is, or can be made a live religion, let him visit Shelbyville, and his doubt will vanish. When minds are instructed, hearts warmed, consciences quickened, when the fallen are raised up, the weak strengthened, the erring reclaimed, there is no question as to the presence of some vitalizing power."

The *Index* reports the numerous engagements of B. F. UNDERWOOD, showing him to be constantly busy in the lecture field, principally in the Western States and Canada, and adds: "Mr. UNDERWOOD is very popular as a lecturer, as shown by the great demand for his services,—and most deservedly popular too, for there is no better advocate of his views in the field. Colonel INGERSOLL is more brilliant, but less methodical and comprehensive in the treatment of his subjects; they are the complements of each other, and accomplish great good, each in his own way."

The Positivists have an able advocate in the *Positive Thinker*, of New York, edited by G. L. HENDERSON and H. B. BROWN. Both of these gentlemen are lecturers on Positivism, and are able writers. They are not slavish followers of COMTE, but teach instead what they call an American Positivism, thus incurring the distrust of their more orthodox brethren.

The Paris Positivists are at last carrying out COMTE'S own plan for a propagandist periodical. The *Revue Occidental*, edited by M. P. LAFITTE, the head of the school, with the assistance of a committee, will be published bi-monthly, and will comprise, in three divisions, a discussion of recent events, political, social and intellectual; original essays; and a docket "des actes officiels emanant de la Direction du Positivisme." English and American contributions are promised.

The Michigan Universalist Ass'n meets at Hinsdale, June 5.

The first annual meeting of the Iowa Unitarian Association was held at Des Moines, May 21-23. Up to the time of going to press we have received no report of the session; but an attractive programme

had been published, announcing sermons or papers by Rev. O. CLUTE of Keokuk, Rev. S. S. HUNTING of Davenport, Rev. D. H. ROGAN of Newton, Rev. J. L. JONES of Wisconsin, Dr. KNOWLES of Keokuk, and Mrs. C. T. COLE of Mt. Pleasant, with a platform meeting on Wednesday evening, and a social reunion Thursday evening.

The Woman's Education Association, of Boston, has by request prepared a list of the most interesting and instructive books for the use of young people from fifteen to twenty years of age, who may be seeking for direction in their reading. The books recommended are believed to be not only valuable in themselves, but useful as an introduction to wider courses of study for such as shall be led to desire a better knowledge of the subjects indicated and the authors represented. For copies of the list, apply to the Secretary of the Woman's Education Association, 3 Marlborough St., Boston, Mass.

The Milton League of Montreal has issued a neat pamphlet edition of the "Prayers, with a discourse on prayer, by GEORGE DAWSON, edited by his wife." The sermon is a very simple exhortation to a life of trust, with not even a word on the philosophy of prayer. Sacred, devout communion with God is its theme; and its style is clear, childlike and tender. Instead of being a defense of prayer, it is a call of all needful hearts to put their trust in the Father. The prayers are simple and earnest, expressed in the common phraseology; but with a kind of freshness, tenderness and insight to them that must have made them very impressive and inspiring as heard from Mr. DAWSON'S lips. They are very different from the prayers of THEODORE PARKER; and yet they have much in them to remind one of his great faith in God, and his plainness of speech.—G. W. C.

Speaking of Mr. LECKEY'S new book, "England in the Eighteenth Century," JOHN W. CHADWICK says: "Take them for all in all, Mr. LECKY'S two volumes are the most cheerful reading possible. No better antidote for SCHOPENHAUER'S pessimism, or any sort of pessimism, could be devised. The one conviction forced upon us by the reading of these pages, is that the world is getting on. Coarseness and cruelty, narrowness and bigotry and superstition, are steadily diminishing from one generation to another. The best men in the reign of GEORGE II were habitual drunkards. The talk of women was as the talk of bar-keepers. The improvement in America has been less conspicuous. There has been improvement, but there has also been deterioration. There is plenty of hard fighting to be done in the near future. But we shall do it with a better heart for knowing what immense advances have been made on English soil since the first GEORGE of Hanover was raised to the British throne."

"The conflict between Orthodoxy and Liberalism in the State Church of Prussia, which was believed to have been avoided by the action of the Supreme Court Council in refusing to suspend Pastor HOSSBACH for liberal utterances, has begun. The Council, in passing on HOSSBACH's case, said that if a preacher denied the consubstantiality with God of the Savior, miracles, and the normative authority of the Bible, his position in the Protestant Church as one of their ministers, became impossible. HOSSBACK was urged to take up this challenge, but refused. A Liberal was soon found, however, who was willing to become a martyr in the cause. Dr. KALTHOFF, of Nickern, was moved to write to the Council that he was a transgressor in those very points which they declared to be inconsistent with the Protestant ministry; that he did not regard the Bible as a doctrinal authority, but only as 'the source of Christian life;' that he only acknowledged spiritual miracles, and that he valued the humanity of Christ too highly to dogmatize about it. The Council showed no hesitation in accepting the issue. It suspended Dr. KALTHOFF immediately, and ordered an investigation into his case."—*Tribune.*

Something better than Creeds.—Rev. M. O. RORK, who was expelled from the Methodist Conference of Michigan last year for denying the doctrines of natural depravity and a literal resurrection, and for teaching a probation after death, has organized a new denomination called "Congregational Methodists." He has two congregations. The following is the only test of membership: "We believe Christianity is not a belief merely, but rather a life; that the sayings of Christ are the plainest possible statements of religious truth, and constitute the only true theology; and that any person who believes and earnestly tries to live in accordance with those sayings, is entitled to church privileges." As a substitute for the old creeds, this is good. But the "basis of union" of the Upper Brook Street Free Church, Manchester, England, of which Rev. SILAS FARRINGTON is minister, is better still. It is as follows: "We are persuaded that the truth on all subjects, as fast as it becomes known to us, is the sole and sufficient authority for all human belief; that justice is the certain and practicable law of all human conduct; that love is the highest and most effective temper of the human spirit. And we here pledge ourselves, with steadfast purpose, to strive to be true in all our thoughts, sincere in all our words, pure in all our desires, just in all our actions, and gentle in all our tempers. We also promise faithful co-operation with one another in our mutual endeavors after a worthy and right life, and in whatever good work it may be in our power to do. In testimony to which, we here record our names." The work of reformation, which is going forward everywhere in religious matters, cannot stop until some such simple basis of union as this takes the place of creeds and articles of faith in all churches.

The orthodox Congregational ministers of Boston do not receive very favorably the proposition to bring the Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregationalists together, at Boston, in anniversary week, which was made last year. Dr. RUFUS ELLIS, of the First Church, (Unitarian) sent a letter to the more distinguished clergymen of both sides, in which he explained that it was desired the two should meet to listen to a paper on some theological or ecclesiastical topic from some one of the clergymen commonly classed as orthodox, and for entertaining the possibility of reunion. He said further: "It has seemed to many of us that the time may be at hand when deeper and broader conceptions of Christianity, with fresh explanations of its recognized facts, may add new knowledge to the old faith, and supply the ground for such a reconstruction: and that our body, could it be at one again, is better fitted than any other for that Christian progress which destroys only in fulfilling. Why should not every New England village have again its one Congregational church, with perhaps its right and left wings of membership, but with its undivided Christian mind, with its conservative men and its latitude men, perhaps, but with its one ministry? What but our lamentable divisions hinder us from possessing this section of our land as in former days, and what better form can be given to the unbound Work of Jesus than is supplied by our simple Christian covenants and elastic church order? If only we are engaged to keep alive a genuine and deep Christian experience, and exercise the faith of our congregations in the true ceremonial of charity, may we not be sure that any who are not within the fold of Jesus will have no wish to be so registered, and make any former act of exclusion needless?" It is hardly probable that the meeting will be held this Spring.—*Alliance.*

Orthodox Sunday Schools.—A great many unbelievers (so-called) send their children to the Sunday Schools of the popular churches, while they themselves would not go into those churches; nor do they care to have their children go there. These "unbelievers" innocently suppose that in the Sunday School their children are being taught to sing beautiful songs, and to love God and all mankind. So they are; and a great deal more besides, which these same parents can be easily convinced of if they will take the pains to look over the lesson papers. The doctrines of each particular church are taught with Jesuitical earnestness. We need not specify what they are. But of this we are assured: That Sunday School which did not faithfully indoctrinate the children would be held recreant to its trust. But we have a still more serious charge to make. Sunday Schools, as generally conducted, are the hot-beds of superstition. They lead our children to believe things utterly unscientific and irrational. They foster in the minds of the young, ideas that are at war with common sense. If, in proof of this, we were to show a tithe of what is taught

in regard to prayer, we would not fail to astonish many parents who now send their children so unsuspectingly to these places. The Bible is held up as a book of absolute verities; and from Solomon's songs to the Revelation of St. John, everything is taught as a literal fact. That such instruction is injurious there can be no doubt. It has been our experience to find children deeply impressed with the lessons of their Sunday School. And their fears have been aroused to an alarming degree by what they have been taught. We owe it to our little ones, as well as to ourselves, to see that their tender minds shall not be burdened with needless and false ideas of God, and Providence, and Human Responsibilities, and Future Judgments, and kindred doctrines. Sunday Schools as now generally carried on, minister to the sectarian and propagandizing objects of the church. This is wrong; and we here plead in behalf of our children that they may be led by wiser hands into richer fields of truth. Our ideal Sunday School is essentially a religion-teaching system, but without cant and without superstition. It does not fill the mind of the child with fear or sectarian bias: but with abounding love to God as he is revealed to us, whether in books or brooks, sermons or stones."—T. P. WILSON, in the *Evolution*.

Items.—HEFELE's great work, "The History of the Councils of the Church," is being translated into English.——Prof. SWING is ill, and it is feared that he will not be able to preach again before Fall.—The *Cincinnati Commercial* prints an admirable sermon of Rev. C. W. WENDTE on "Art, a Revealer of the Divine to Mankind," occasioned by the opening of the Ladies' Loan Art Exhibition in that city.——The one-hundredth anniversary of the death of VOLTAIRE was celebrated in Paris on the 30th of May. Our next issue will contain a paper upon VOLTAIRE, prepared for us by Rev. JOHN W. CHADWICK, of Brooklyn, N. Y.——"The Devil's Pedigree" is the suggestive title of a very interesting lecture on Zoroastrianism, recently delivered, and published in pamphlet form, by Rev. J. H. CROOKER, of LaPorte, Ind. The lecture gives the natural history, not only of his Satanic Majesty, but also of some five or six of the fundamental dogmas of orthodoxy, which came into existence as a result of his existence, and from the same source with him.——Mr. A. R. GROTE, in the *Evolution*, says: "For what is preached in some—perhaps most—Presbyterian churches to-day, the clergymen would have undoubtedly been burnt in the time of CALVIN."——In Scotland, the Presbyterians have publicly burned the Papal decree establishing the Scottish Catholic hierachy.——A Sodality of Colored Catholics, numbering fifty members, has recently been organized in Providence, Rhode Island.——ROBERT COLLYER's "Story of the Prairies," which first appeared in the *Christian Register*, has been printed as a tract by the American Unita-

rian Association. Besides being reprinted in England, it has been translated and published in the Welsh language.——In witness of the statement often made in the PAMPHLET MISSION that hundreds and thousands, of whom few ever hear, are calling for a religion of "freedom, fellowship and character," we notice the formation of a society for this purpose in Greeley, Col. The society has rented a hall, and has commenced work under favorable circumstances.——A Liberal religious movement has recently been started in Waterville, Kansas, under the ministry of Rev. M. E. TAYLOR.——A Liberal League, with a membership of seventy, has been organized at Olathe, Kansas.——Prof. PATTON (the prosecutor of SWING,) has been elected Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly for the ensuing year.——The Reformed Episcopal Church, at their recent meeting in Newark, N. J., declared against theatres.——In its latest editorial on "Preachers," the *Boston Investigator* says MINOT J. SAVAGE stands at the head of those in Boston "as a gentleman of ability, liberality, independence, and common sense."——The Friends are to build a college for "the better education of women, at Bryn-Mawr, Pa., which is to cost, with its endowments, $1,000,000.

Religion as a Natural Development.—A new German treatise on the "Origin and Nature of Religion," by the eminent historian of the Greek Philosophy, Dr. EDUARD ZELLER, contains the following noble passage, which is well worth translating for the readers of the PAMPHLET MISSION.—C. W. W.

"We have already shown in a previous part of this essay, how, by a progressive development, man's original Polytheism finally resulted in Monotheism. In this way we may trace back the genealogy of all religion (even if its intermediate members are known to us very imperfectly), to those primitive forms of faith, which in their main motive, are the outcome of man's sensuous needs, and the sentiments of fear and hope to which they give rise. Through the childish narrowness of these early ideas concerning the Gods, and the superstitious crudeness and outwardness of their accompanying cults, these primitive forms of faith and worship produce upon us a foreign and repellant impression. Infidel opponents of religion have concluded that because of such an origin of it, religion itself is only a product of superstition and ignorance, and together with these dark shapes must disappear before the spread of enlightenment. Friends of religion, on the other hand, in order to escape this conclusion, have put themselves in opposition to every natural explanation of its origin and character; they feared to deprive it of its value, and to desecrate it, if they admitted that it sprang up with humanity out of the earth, instead of having been sent down to man as a supernatural gift from heaven.

In this, both were at fault. The worth and dignity of religion do not depend on how it has originated, and by what path it has, in the course of history, developed into its later forms, but solely upon what it is in itself, and what it does for the spiritual life of humanity. It is with this question of the origin of religion, as with the related one concerning the origin of the human race. The first men may, as a suggestive myth reports, have been created by the Godhead after its own image; or the human organism may have been developed in the course of thousands of years out of less perfect animal forms, as is the opinion of Natural Science to-day; the real contents of human life, its worth and its aims, are not affected by either conclusion. The need for intellectual cognition is rooted equally deep in our nature, the contemplation of the beautiful affords us the same enjoyment, the consciousness of our human worth, our sympathy for others, the reminder of our duty, are equally strong within us, whether the first progenitors of our race were Sons of God or gorillas.

As little as the individual feels ashamed because his organism a few months before birth was much less developed and perfect than that of any bird which crawls out of its egg, as little need the human race think the poorer of its dignity and destiny, if it should be proved that it was developed through periods of uncertain duration out of an analogous germinal condition. As soon as one sees that this development was a natural and necessary one, it must also be acknowledged that everything which was its outcome, and which is still to be evolved from it, is grounded in the nature of man; by virtue of which nature he stands high above every other organism less capable of development. The same is true of each separate domain in the activities of human life. In each the sole question of interest is, what it is, and not how it has become such. * * * We do not despise art, however well we may be convinced that it began in the clumsy attempts of rude and savage peoples. We do not hold science to be worthless because philosophy, for instance, had to work its way slowly and painfully out of mythology, astronomy out of astrology, and chemistry out of alchemy. It does not appear why it should be different with religion, or with what right we may predicate that it alone, among all the creations of the human spirit, has been excepted from the law of historical development; or why, on the other hand, religion should be discredited because it was *not* thus excepted.

Any such condemnation of religion would then only be justified if the imperfection of its beginning continued to cleave to it through all its later history; if it were impossible for it, because of its very nature, ever to rise above them."

That this is not the case, however, Prof. ZELLER amply shows in the progressive development and perfection of man's faith and worship through the ages.

German Liberals.—From Prof. KOTTINGER's "Liberal Guide," we learn that the German Free Congregations had their origin in the religious and political revolution of 1848 in Germany. At that time the Society of "The Friends of Light" was formed. Its members were rationalists, and were compelled to hold their meetings in fields, forests and railroad stations. Then WISLICENUS published his "Writ or Spirit?" which taught that "the Bible is not the highest authority in us; *that* is the spirit which lives in us." This book was the cause of the organizing of the first Free Congregations. The first one was gathered in Halle by WISLICENUS himself. They held conferences in 1847-49, and published periodicals. Governmental reactions soon came. "In Austria, Bavaria, Hessen-Cassel, the free congregations were suppressed by force, in other countries, especially in Prussia, superintended by the police; their ministers were imprisoned, sent to asylums for the insane or exiled, their schools shut up, their property confiscated, their adherents who carried on a trade starved by hunger. Their dead were hardly permitted to be buried. The press was put to silence." A better state of things came in with WILLIAM. The exiles returned, and new societies were gathered. A new union was formed, which holds annual provincial Synods and a triennial General Assembly. Some of the exiles came to America; among them was SCHUENEMANN-POTT, now of San Francisco, the minister of a large congregation. The first congregation was gathered in New York, July, 1850, by EDWARD SCHROETER, and soon after another was formed in St. Louis. In 1851, SCHROETER organized a congregation in Milwaukee, and began the publication of the *Humanist*. Other congregations have been formed in most places where there are educated Germans. A general league was formed in 1859, and a Diet is held once in three years. The *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee, is the organ of these societies. "The only object which unites the members of these associations are the deliverences which regularly take place in their meetings. Their themes are derived from the sphere of the Natural Sciences, of the modern views of the Universe, Ethics, and universal history. In most places the orations are accompanied by exquisite songs. Several societies possess their own halls, which are built, though in a plain style, yet with good taste. Prayers and all ceremonies are excluded from their meetings. The mutual care of the cultivation of the whole life supplies the want of a divine service. In their Sunday Schools, the principles of morals, the results of the scientific study of the Universe, the history of religions, are communicated." The constitution of the league of these congregations "declares the highest, leading principle, which every member is obliged to acknowledge, to be free self-determination according to advancing Reason and Science, in all the relations of life." Its general principles are that Nature and History are the sources of all truth, that earthly happiness is the

highest good, and that universal liberty, culture and welfare are the paths to it.—G. W. C.

A Sunday School Manual—The German Free Religious Congregations in America (Freie Gemeinde) have for several years used a text book for Sunday Schools, prepared by Prof. H. M. KOTTINGER. This work has now been translated into English as "The Youth's Liberal Guide for their Moral Culture and Religious Enlightenment." *Part first* is devoted to Moral Culture, while its two sections treat of morals in examples, and the doctrine of duties and rights. In well-selected anecdotes, poems and stories, the various moral duties are inculcated in the first section. Under the head of duties to ourselves, modesty, temperance, courage, application, frugality, perseverance, are illustrated. Then come duties of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures; charity and philanthropy, meekness and forbearance, politeness, filial love and obedience, friendship, tolerance, love of enemies. In this way also, rights and duties of justice, and public rights and duties, are illustrated. The words and the deeds of great and good men are here made to convey the lesson to be taught. Section second is a series of well-arranged questions and answers, going over the same ground already surveyed in section first. After explainining the nature of morality, the various private and public rights and duties are discussed. The duties in regard to life and health, property, mental and moral culture; towards parents, companions, the poor and ignorant, religious sects and enemies; and those pertaining to society and the State, are well treated. With the exception of two or three hints of communistic notions, the first part would be very acceptable in any Liberal Sunday School, and would be a profitable means of moral training. The *second part* is devoted to Religious Enlightenment, and gives an account of the principal religions, the history of Christianity and the narratives of the Bible. It then gives in catechetical form an account of the universe as viewed from the stand-point of modern science. This part is intensely materialistic and atheistic. It is proven that there is no God and no future life. Yet it sums up the opinions of the school of thought it represents in a clear manner, and for those accepting its teachings it will be found admirably adapted to give them an understanding of what is taught by the best scholars entertaing these opinions. The book needs a careful revision, eliminating its unrhetorical expressions and its defective proof-reading. Many of the readers of the PAMPHLET MISSION will find much to interest them in this work. It may be obtained of E. S. WALKER, Florence, Iowa. Part first of this work, paged and indexed separately from the other, could be very profitably used in Unitarian Sunday Schools, and really fills a place nothing else exists to occupy. Its method is admirable and its teaching wholesome.—G. W. C.

A New Form of Temperance Organization and Work.—The following is a copy of a circular published and distributed among his congregation and Sunday School by W. C. GANNETT, of St. Paul, a few weeks ago. The circular explains itself.

"There are persons who, for various reasons, cannot, or will not, join the common Temperance Societies; but who will gladly give up drinking all alcoholic drink in order to throw what influence they may have against a danger deadly to so many, and to show their respect for, and their sympathy with, all who are struggling hard against the great temptation. Is there no way in which such persons can band themselves together to make their sympathy more helpful? No way in which their children can be trained directly in such sympathy, without asking them to take the life promise, whose meaning so few of them can realize?

The Teachers of Unity Church Sunday School offer the following plan for the consideration of their friends, and invite you to a meeting (at a specified time and place,) to talk together about the formation of a Temperance Society in the way proposed. They wish to take counsel with the parents, and have their approval, before saying anything to the children; and they ask for criticisms and objections as well as approvals. It is not their thought to confine the Society to children.

Name of Society:—The True Helpers.

Motto:—"It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is put in danger of falling, or is made weak."

Members:—All persons above the age of eight years who wish to take the Pledge.

Officers:—President, Secretary and Treasurer, four Directors, (two boys and two girls,) and two Advisers, (to be chosen from the older members.)

The Directors and Advisers of one term shall be a committee to nominate officers for the next term. No one to hold office for more than two consecutive terms at farthest. Elections to take place by a standing vote. When a new President is elected, the retiring President will escort him to the chair.

Membership Fee:—Ten cents at each renewal of the Pledge.

Badges:—Two; one the Society Badge, bearing the words, "For Their Sake," to be kept by the Secretary, and worn by the members at the meetings; the other the Home Badge, with the words, "On Honor," to be given to each member to keep at home, as a reminder of the self-denial and helpfulness which are the objects of the Society.

Meetings:—To be held once in three months. (As will be seen, the Society really expires and creates itself anew every three months. At each renewal-meeting some sort of a good time, with songs, short speeches, etc., is expected. Details of the programme are here omitted, save the following:)

The President will then rise, and ask all the members, old and new, to do the same, while he asks and they answer in concert, the questions read at each meeting in renewing the Pledge.

He will ask:

Q. For what is this Society formed?

A. That we may take our part in doing away with one of the great evils of the world:—Intemperance.

Q. How do we propose to do this?

A. By denying ourselves a small pleasure which leads many to temptation and sin.

Q. Why will this be of any use?

A. Because there may be some among ourselves exposed to such danger, and by this self-denial each may help all the others to escape it.

Q. If we could be sure that none of *us* would ever be intemperate, would there be any reason for this Society?

A. Yes. Much of the greatest sorrow and crime in the world is caused by strong drink. To band ourselves together in this way will throw our influence against its use—the use of that which carries deadly danger to so many, and suffering to so many more; and it will show our sympathy with those who are struggling hard against the great temptation. Nothing helps them more than such respect and sympathy.

Q. Why do we pay dues in this Society?

A. We pay because we are glad to give something for this work; and the money will be mainly used in helping poor children who are suffering from the intemperance of others.

Q. What is the meaning of the name of our Society?

A. The *True* means that we will be true to our Pledge, and the *True Helpers*, that we will truly try to help all who find it hard to walk in the path of temperance.

Q. Why do we take our Pledge for three months only?

A. First, because a Pledge to us is a very solemn thing, not lightly to be taken, never to be forgotten or broken.

Secondly, because some of our members are too young to understand the full meaning of a life promise.

Thirdly, because some of us who are older, are not willing to give up our freedom of action for all future time.

Q. What is the Pledge which we promise to keep?

A. We do faithfully promise for the next three months, that we will not drink any wine, beer, cider, or other alcoholic drinks, except as medicine.

All take seats.

Q. Do you each and every one make this solemn promise at this time? Do you? (addressing the one farthest from him, and so continuing until he has spoken to every individual; the response to be given by each one rising in his seat as the individual "Do you?" is addressed to him, and answering "I do.")

All stand and repeat the following prayer.

"Our Father, help us to be true to the promise we have made, and to help each other to be true to it."

Mr. GANNETT writes: "I feel surer and surer that the motive, "*For their sake*," (instead of the idea that abstinence is the only safe Temperance,) and the *short pledge* (instead of the life-pledge,) are features on which some Temperance work ought to be done."

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(Noticed by Mr. Gannett in No. 5, page 9.)

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